



The Senior Sentinel

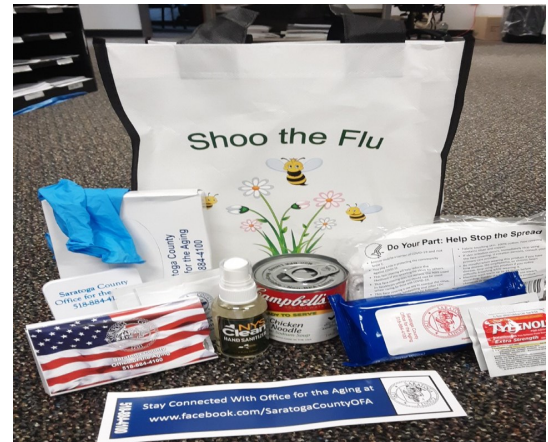


The Office for the Aging will be **closed Monday, October 12th** in observance of Columbus Day.

The Office for the Aging Annual Senior Picnic

On September 10th Office for the Aging celebrated the annual picnic. This year to ensue safety precautions the picnic was held as a drive-thru event. With great success we served 300 seniors and gave out *Shoo the Flu* bags.

We would like to say thank you to all that helped: OFA staff and volunteers, Saratoga County Board of Supervisors, Department heads, Congresswoman Elise Stafanik, Congressman Paul Tonko, Senator James Tedisco, Senator Daphne Jordan, Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh, Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner, Saratoga County Fairgrounds, and Northeast Dining and Lodging.



Communicating Clearly While Wearing a Face Covering

Wearing a face covering is an important part of keeping you and others healthy right now. But they can also make talking to those around you more difficult. Face coverings can muffle sound. They can also hide important clues about the speaker's message and emotions. This can make it hard to understand speech, especially for those with hearing loss. Millions of people in the U.S have hearing loss, including half of those older than 75. Now, more than ever, it's important to make an extra effort to communicate. Speak more clearly and louder than you normally would, without shouting. Reduce background noise when possible. Be aware that physical distance can also make hearing more difficult. Make sure the person you're speaking with understands you. Ask and adapt if needed. You can also offer to use another method-a smartphone, paper and pen, or whiteboard-to get your message across. When it's essential that you understand spoken details, like at a doctor's appointment, consider bringing a friend or family member to help. Face coverings can make communication challenging for everyone. But people with hearing problems often rely on lip-reading to understand what's being said. Consider using a clear face covering to make your mouth visible, instead of a cloth covering. With a little extra effort and problem solving, we can all communicate clearly while staying safe.



From Our Dietitian:

Fall Back on Healthy Habits

Don't let Daylight savings time negatively affect your eating habits. Although the shorter days and brisk autumn air can trigger cravings for "comfort foods" stay on track with some of these helpful tips:

-Fall Back-but think ahead. With shorter days may come the feeling of having less time. Plan ahead when it comes to your meals and snacks. Prepare a shopping lists for the foods you will need for both meals and snacks in the week ahead. Prep meals ahead and prepare extra portions of healthy foods that you can freeze for later. Make your own portion-controlled snack bags ahead of time rather than eating out of a bag or container.

-Think Healthy Comforts-As we move into the Autumn season, thoughts of enjoying some of our favorite comfort foods seem to take hold. Many of the comfort foods we grew up with can be high in fat and calories such as cream soups, casseroles, stews and macaroni & cheese. This does not mean that you have to eliminate them completely however. Choose healthier versions of your favorite comfort foods such as broth-based soups, stews and casseroles made with lean meats and vegetables or pasta topped with low fat cheese and cheese sauces. Make comfort food swaps in recipes. For example, substitute reduced fat cheddar cheese in your macaroni & cheese, instead of cream try evaporated skim milk, try fat free Greek yogurt instead of sour cream. When baking, applesauce can often be substituted for part of the oil in your recipes to help save calories.

-Don't fall back on fitness-With the days getting darker earlier, it may be difficult to fit in your walk outside. Consider changing up your routine to get some exercise earlier in the day. You could even consider getting up an hour earlier each day to accomplish this. One added benefit to this is that activity in the morning can help you feel more energized throughout the day. Another option is to consider trying a new exercise video/on line class at home. As always, be sure to check with your health care provider before making a change in the type or duration of your exercise to make sure the activity is appropriate for you.

Try to be consistent-to fit in regular scheduled meals and snacks as much as possible. This will help you maintain a good energy level throughout the day. Try having three small meals a day with healthy snacks in between. Snacks can add to overall nutrition if chosen wisely. Consider trying some warm snacks to add that dimension of "comfort food" and warm you up in the winter months. Some ideas here could include:

A warm bowl of oatmeal sprinkled with cinnamon and dried fruit and/or nuts.

An apple cut in half with the core scooped out and topped with raisins, cinnamon, a dab of soft margarine.

Use a small tortilla shell to wrap up low fat shredded cheese, salsa and canned rinsed beans. Microwave on 30 seconds until warm and melted for more of a savory snack. Read labels on tortilla for ones with the lowest sodium level. Soft corn tortillas often contain very little sodium. Use small size tortilla for snacks to help keep snack calories in balance.

Saratoga County Board of Elections

Notice to Voters:

- Poll Sites will be open for the 2020 General Election for in-person voting.
- All voters who wish to obtain a absentee ballot for the 2020 General Election must request an absentee ballot. Applications submitted for the 2020 Primary Election cannot be honored for the 2020 General election
- If you wish to obtain an absentee ballot to avoid the spread of COVID-19, check off "Temporary Illness" in box 1 on the absentee ballot application.
- If you are a voter with special needs, you may apply for an Accessible Electronic Absentee Ballot.
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Important Deadlines:

- Registering to vote for the first time: October 9
- Submit an address change: October 14
- Submit an absentee ballot application by mail: before October 27.
- Submit an absentee ballot application in-person: November 2.
- Return your voted absentee ballot by mail: before November 3.
- Return your voted absentee ballot in-person: November 3.

For more information please call **Board of Elections (518) 885-2249**

Early Voting

Clifton Park –Halfmoon Library: 475 Moe Rd, Clifton Pak
Gavin Park: 10 Lewis Dr., Wilton
Board of Elections: 50 W.High St., Ballston Spa

Saturday, October 24:	9am-2pm
Sunday, October 25:	9am-2pm
Monday, October 26:	12pm-8pm
Tuesday, October 27:	9am-5pm
Wednesday, October 28:	12pm-8pm
Thursday, October 29:	9am-5pm
Friday, October 30:	9am-5pm
Saturday, October 31:	9am-2pm
Sunday, November 1:	9am-2pm

All voters may vote at any poll site.
All poll sites are accessible to voters with physical disabilities.

Voters who cast a ballot during the early voting period will not be allowed to vote on Election Day.

With COVID-19 Lurking, the Flu Vaccine is Important Than Ever this Flu Season

The 2020 flu season is just around the corner. Like every year, the flu will be best contained when as many people as possible get a flu vaccine, and this is especially important this year as the health system continues to grapple with the COVID-19 public health emergency.

People can contract the flu at any time during the year, but the rates of the illness increase throughout the fall and generally peak in winter. While some people who are infected with an influenza virus might have only mild symptoms, for others the virus is deadly. The flu kills thousands of people each year. The flu vaccine is available every year, but public health officials warn that too few people take advantage of it. Last year, 45 percent of Americans got a flu shot.

This year, flu season will hit while COVID-19 is still a major threat. Telling the two infections apart will be difficult since the symptoms are quite similar, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, and fatigue. Both diseases can also cause a range of reactions, from mild illness to severe cases that require hospitalization and can be fatal. Only laboratory tests will be able to distinguish accurately between the two infections.

Experts at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and other institutions worry that the combination of a bad flu season and COVID-19 could be too much for hospital systems. That's why the flu vaccine will be more important than ever—to reduce the incidence of flu and take pressure off of a strained health care system. The CDC has contracted with vaccine manufacturers to have more doses of the vaccine available to ensure everyone who wants the flu shot can get access.

Not every person can safely get a flu shot, and everyone should consult with their health care providers before getting vaccinated. But it is important that everyone who can get vaccinated does. This reduces the risk of the individual getting sick and cuts down on transmission from person to person. Getting vaccinated protects others in the community who cannot get the flu shot.

Most people with Medicare will pay nothing for a flu vaccine, and many other sources of insurance cover the flu shot as well. Check with your health insurance provider before getting any vaccine to understand the costs.

Reprinted Medicare Rights Center 9/10/20



GET ANSWERS

Medicare Interactive

Available only through Medicare Rights, Medicare Interactive (MI) is a free and independent online reference tool thoughtfully designed to help older adults, people with disabilities, their families and caregivers, and the professionals who serve them navigate the complex world of health insurance.

<https://www.medicarerights.org/learn-medicare>

NATIONAL HELPLINE:

800-333-4114

For help with Medicare questions, counselors are available Monday through Friday, and are happy to answer your questions about insurance choices, Medicare rights and protections, payment denials and appeals, complaints about care or treatment, and Medicare bills.

SNAP Benefits for Seniors: 7 Key Food Assistance Program Facts

SNAP keeps seniors healthy and reduces medical costs. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to eligible low-income individuals and families. The program is especially important in helping low-income older adults afford nutritious food so they can stay as healthy as possible. With financial assistance, seniors won't be forced to make dangerous trade-offs like skipping meals or skipping medication.

1. **Few seniors participate in SNAP**– Only 2 out of 5 eligible adults over age 60 are enrolled in SNAP. That means 3 out of 5 seniors who qualify are missing out on benefits.
2. **The average SNAP benefit for seniors is \$105/month**–A common myth about SNAP is that it only gives \$16 worth of benefits per month. Don't assume that's all older adults could get. Yes, \$16 is the minimum monthly benefit. But 80% of senior SNAP participants receive more than the minimum. The latest numbers show the average month benefit for an older adult living alone was \$105 per month. That is a significant savings in food costs. On top of that, many seniors are able to increase their monthly SNAP benefit by taking advantage of deductions for other expenses.
3. **Many seniors who qualify for the excess medical expense deduction don't use**–Currently only 16% of older adults use the medical expense deduction. But many SNAP-eligible seniors could qualify. If seniors spends more that \$35 a month on out of –pocket medical cost, might be able to deduct that from their gross income when applying for SNAP.
4. **Many senior SNAP participants experience isolation**– About 80% of older adults who get SNAP benefits live alone. More than half have little to no income and live on general assist Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or other benefits. For these seniors, getting an average of \$1272 in SNAP benefits can mean the difference between having food and going hungry.
5. **SNAP helps the local economy**–When SNAP benefits are spent at local stores, it brings money into the community that every \$1 in additional SNAP benefits generates \$1.79 in local economic activity. Plus, additional \$1 billion in SNAP benefits would generate 8,900 full-time jobs. So seniors would actually be helping their city by participation in SNAP-a win-win situation
6. **Access to SNAP can reduce health care costs**–When older adults are in debt, they have to make trade-offs that are likely to damage their health. That could mean resorting to skipping meals or reducing medication doses. A recent study of low-income Maryland seniors found that the participants are 23% less likely to enter a nursing home and 4% less likely to be hospitalized in the year after receiving SNAP. Participating in SNAP was also linked to lower overall health care expenses and Medicaid/Medicare.
7. **All the information needed to apply for SNAP can be found in one place**–Use the SNAP state directory of resources (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory>) find each state's SNAP program. Choosing a state on the map takes you to that state's SNAP website, application form and more. 44 states currently allow people to apply online, so there are also links to the online applications. And in some areas, applications are available in multiple languages.

For more information on SNAP please contact **Office for the Aging** at (518) 884-4100 or **Saratoga County Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** at (518) 884-4155.

Reprinted from DailyCaring

Cold weather is upon us which means its almost time to apply for HEAP Benefits!

This year, the Home Energy Assistance Program opens back up on November 2nd, 2020. You and your household may qualify for financial assistance with your heating bills this year based on your monthly income. If this is something you and your family may be interested in, you can apply online starting November 2nd at mybenefits.ny.gov or call our office at 518-884-4111 with any questions regarding the program or to be put on our HEAP mailing list.



**Don't forget to change your clocks on
Sunday, November 1st**